

Jaggi Vasudev

Jaggi Vasudev, commonly known as **Sadhguru**, is an Indian **yogi**, **mystic**, **philanthropist** and author of over 100 titles in 8 different languages.^[1] He founded the **Isha Foundation**, a non-profit organisation which offers **yoga** programs around the world, including India, United States, England, Lebanon, Singapore, Canada, Malaysia, Uganda, China, Nepal and Australia. The Foundation is also involved in various social and community development activities, which have resulted in the Foundation being granted special consultative status with the **Economic and Social Council of the United Nations**.^{[2][3]}

1 Early life

Born into a **Telugu** family^[4] in **Mysore, Karnataka** on Tuesday 3 September 1957^[5] to Susheela and Dr. Vasudev, Jagadish was the youngest of four children – two boys and two girls. Sadhguru's father was an **ophthalmologist** with the **Indian Railways** and as a result, the family moved frequently. At a young age, Jagadish, or Jaggi as he came to be known, developed an interest in nature and would frequently go into nearby forests which would sometimes last up to three days at a time. At the age of 11, Jaggi came in contact with **Malladihalli Sri Raghavendra Swamiji** who taught him a set of simple **yoga asanas**, the practice of which he regularly maintained.^[6] Sadhguru states that “without a single day's break, this simple **yoga** that was taught to him kept happening and led to a much deeper experience later.”^{[5]:39}

After his schooling, he graduated from the **University of Mysore** with a bachelor's degree in **English Literature**.^[7] During his college years, he developed an interest in travel and motorcycles. A frequent haunt of his and his friends was the **Chamundi Hill** near Mysore, where they often had gathered and went for nocturnal drives. He also travelled to various places in the country on his motorcycle. When he reached the Indo-Nepal border, he was stopped from entering Nepal because he did not possess a passport. This experience made him resolve “to earn some quick money,” and just ride off somewhere where people couldn't stop him. This led him to open several successful businesses after graduation, including a **poultry farm**, a **brickworks** and a construction business.^[7]

2 Spiritual experience

At the age of twenty-five on 23 September 1982,^[8] he rode up **Chamundi Hill** and sat on a rock, when he had a spiritual experience. Sadhguru describes his experience, “Till that moment in my life I always thought this is me and that's somebody else and something else. But for the first time I did not know which is me and which is not me. Suddenly, what was me was just all over the place. The very rock on which I was sitting, the air that I breathe, the very atmosphere around me, I had just exploded into everything. That sounds like utter insanity. This, I thought it lasted for ten to fifteen minutes but when I came back to my normal consciousness, it was about four-and-a-half-hours I was sitting there, fully conscious, eyes open, but time had just flipped.”^{[9]:04:04} Six weeks after this experience, he left his business to his friend and travelled extensively in an effort to gain insight into his mystical experience. After a year of meditation and travel, Sadhguru decided to teach **yoga** to share his inner experience.^[8]

In 1983, he conducted his first **yoga** class with seven participants in Mysore. Over time, he began conducting **yoga** classes across Karnataka and **Hyderabad** travelling from class to class on his motorcycle. He lived off the proceeds of his poultry farm rental and refused payment for the classes. A usual practice of his was to donate the collections received from participants to a local charity on the last day of the class.^[8] These initial programs were the basic format on which the **Isha Yoga** classes were later built.

3 Dhyanalinga

Main article: **Dhyanalinga**

In 1994, Sadhguru conducted the first program in the ashram premises, during which he discussed the **Dhyanalinga**. The **Dhyanalinga** is a **yogic** temple and a space for meditation, the **consecration** of which, Sadhguru had stated was his life's mission entrusted to him by his **Guru**.^[8] In 1996, the stone edifice of the **linga** was ordered and arrived at the **ashram**. After three years of work, the **Dhyanalinga** was completed on 23 June 1999^[10] and opened to the public on 23 November.^[11]

The **Dhyanalinga** **yogic** temple offers a meditative space that does not ascribe to any particular faith or belief system.^[12] A 76-foot dome, constructed using only bricks and stabilised mud **mortar** without steel or concrete,^[13]



The Dhyanalinga within the temple dome.

covers the sanctum sanctorum. The lingam is 13 feet, 9 inches in height and made of high density black granite. The Sarva Dharma Sthamba, located at the front entrance, functions as an icon of singularity, with the sculptural reliefs and symbols of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Shinto inscribed as a universal welcome.^[14]

4 Isha Foundation

Main article: [Isha Foundation](#)

Sadhguru established Isha Foundation, a non-religious,



Saplings being readied for transportation at a PGH nursery.

non-profit organisation entirely run by volunteers. The Isha Yoga Center near Coimbatore was founded in 1992, and hosts a series of programs to heighten self-awareness through yoga. The foundation works in tandem with international bodies like the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.^[2]

4.1 Social initiatives

He also founded Project GreenHands (PGH) a grassroots ecological initiative which was awarded the highest Indian environmental award, the Indira Gandhi Paryavaran

Puraskar, by the Government of India in June 2010.^[15] PGH aims to increase the green cover in Tamil Nadu by 10% and has successfully overseen the planting of more than 17 million trees by over 2 million volunteers. In an interview to the National Geographic Green magazine, Sadhguru explained the impetus which led him to establish Project GreenHands: “In the year 1998, certain experts [...] made a prediction, by 2025, 60% of Tamil Nadu will be a desert. [...] I decided to drive across Tamil Nadu and see for myself if this is true. [...] I realized they were completely wrong because it wouldn’t go to 2025, it would happen much faster according to me. [...] So from ‘98 to 2003, 2004, I went about planting trees in people’s minds. And since 2004, we are transplanting those trees back to the ground.”^[16]

Action for Rural Rejuvenation (ARR), is an initiative under Isha Foundation, that is aimed towards improving the overall health and quality of life of the rural poor. ARR was established by Sadhguru in 2003 and seeks to benefit 70 million people in 54,000 villages across South India. As of 2010, ARR has reached over 4,200 villages and a population of over 7 million people.^{[17][18]} He has also been involved with agricultural and farmers’ associations to work towards resolving issues faced by Indian farmers.^[19]

Isha Vidhya, is Isha Foundation’s educational initiative, which aims to raise the level of education and literacy in rural India. There are seven schools in operation which educate around 3000 students.^[20] The foundation has also “adopted” 26 government schools to reach out to students from financially constrained backgrounds, and aims to adopt up to 3000 schools.^{[21][22]}

5 Yoga programs



Sadhguru conducting the Inner Engineering Program at the Bombay Stock Exchange, Mumbai.

After the establishment of the ashram, Sadhguru began conducting regular yoga programs at the Isha Yoga Center, including a course for the Indian Hockey team in 1996.^{[23][24]} In 1997, he began conducting classes in the United States^{[25][26]} and in 1998, he began conduct-

ing yoga classes for life-term prisoners in Tamil Nadu prisons.^[27] From 2011, he began conducting programs with large-scale participation of up to 10,000 and 15,000 participants at once. These large-scale programs have been attended by over 75,000 people in total.^{[28][29]}

The programs offered by Sadhguru are offered under the umbrella of Isha Yoga. The word Isha means the formless divine.^[30] Isha Yoga's flagship program is 'Inner Engineering' where individuals are initiated into meditation and pranayam and the Shambhavi Mahamudra.^[31] He is also conducting yoga classes for the corporate leadership to introduce them to what he calls "inclusive economics," which he says introduces a sense of compassion and inclusiveness into today's economic scenario.^{[32][33]}

Sadhguru also regularly conducts Mahasathsangs in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka that include discourses, meditations and question and answer sessions with the audience. These Mahasathsangs are also used as platforms to encourage tree-planting activities.^[34] He also takes spiritual aspirants on annual yatras to Mount Kailash and the Himalayas. The Kailash Yatra led by Sadhguru is among the largest groups to make the trip to Kailash, with 514 pilgrims attending the journey in 2010.^{[35][36]} He also spends time in technical institutes to relieve them from stress like SRM University, Chennai.

Sadhguru also organises all-night Mahashivarathri celebrations every year at the Isha Yoga Center, which in 2013, were attended by an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people approximately.^{[37][38][39]} The night includes music, dance and guided meditation sessions. In 2013, performers included Carnatic singer Aruna Sairam, dancer Anita Ratnam and the band, The Raghu Dixit Project.^[39]

In March 2005, construction of the Isha Institute of Inner-sciences (III) in McMinnville, Tennessee, USA was begun and was completed 6 months later. Sadhguru had decided to establish III as a center for spiritual growth in the Western Hemisphere. On 7 November 2008, Sadhguru consecrated the Mahima Hall, a 39,000 square foot, free-standing meditation hall at the III. Mahima Hall is the largest meditation hall in the Western Hemisphere.^[40] On 30 January 2010, Sadhguru consecrated the Linga Bhairavi, a representation of the feminine aspects of the divine at the Isha Yoga Center.^[5]

6 Participation in Global and Economic Forums

Sadhguru has spoken at the United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit in 2000,^[41] the World Economic Forum in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.^[42] On 24 June 2013, he conducted a multi-religious session titled, "Interfaith Deliberations on the Universality of Religions" at the Isha Yoga Center, which was attended by representatives of various religions, and coincided with the four-



KV Kamath, who was present at the Isha Insight program.

teenth anniversary celebrations of the Dhyanalunga.^{[43][44]}

In 2012, he was voted among the hundred most powerful Indians for his contribution in the field of environmental protection and for encouraging public participation in ecological issues.^[45] He was also a participant in the 2006 documentary film ONE: The Movie. He has also been involved in one-on-one interactions as part of the "In Conversations With the Mystic" program with Virender Sehwal, Juhi Chawla, Barkha Dutt, Anupam Kher, Jasti Chelameswar, Dilip Cherian, Muzaffar Ali, Tarun Tahiliani and Kiran Bedi.^{[46][47][48]}

In 2012, he initiated the Isha Insight program, which focuses on helping small and medium businesses scale up their business activities. The program was conducted by Ram Charan with KV Kamath, Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao, Shankar Annaswamy, Vellayan Subbiah and Pramod Chaudhari also active in the program.^[49] In an interview with Forbes magazine, Sadhguru, speaking about the motivation behind setting up the program, said, "While speaking at economic summits and to leaders in India and outside, I have noticed that the most serious issue people have is a lack of insight into what they are doing, or what they could do. That's how we ended up creating this programme called Insight."^[50]

7 Publications

7.1 English

- *Three Truths of Well Being*, ISBN 978-01-4342-138-2
- *Encounter the Enlightened*, ISBN 81-86685-60-X
- *Mystic's Musings*, ISBN 81-86685-59-6
- *Joy 24x7*, ISBN 978-81-7992-914-8
- *Pebbles of Wisdom*, ISBN 978-81-7992-952-0
- *The Mystic Eye*, ISBN 81-7992-883-7
- *Essential Wisdom from a Spiritual Master*, ISBN 81-7992-882-9
- *Flowers on the Path*, ISBN 81-87910-05-4
- *Himalayan Lust*, ISBN 978-81-8495-076-2
- *Eternal Echoes: The Sacred Sounds Through the Mystic*, ISBN 81-87910-02-X
- *Dhyanalina: The Silent Revolution*, ISBN 81-87910-00-3
- *Dhyanalina: The Eternal Form*
- *Circus of The Mind*, ISBN 81-87910-10-0
- *Unleashing The Mind*, ISBN 81-87910-08-9
- *Good And Bad Divides The World*, ISBN 81-87910-07-0
- *Enlightenment: What It Is*, ISBN 81-87910-06-2
- *Sacred Space For Self-transformation*, ISBN 81-87910-09-7
- *Ancient Technology For The Modern Mind*, ISBN 81-87910-11-9
- *Three Truths of Well Being*, ISBN 978-0-67008-706-8
- *Midnights with the Mystic*, ISBN 978-1-57174-561-3
- *A Guru Always takes you for a Ride*, ISBN 978-8-18791-053-4
- *Ancient Technology For The Modern Mind*, ISBN 978-8-18791-011-4
- *Don't Polish Your Ignorance....it may shine*, ISBN 978-8-18495-200-1
- *Of Mystics & Mistakes*, ISBN 978-8-18495-308-4
- *Body - The Greatest Gadget/Mind Is Your Business*, ISBN 978-9-35083-360-5
- *Emotion The Juice Of Life : Compulsiveness To Consciousness*, ISBN 978-93-5083-362-9

- *Encounter the Enlightened*, ISBN 978-8-18668-560-0
- *Sadhguru Biography-More Than A Life*, ISBN 978-0-67008-512-5
- *Why Suffering*
- *Inner Management: In the Presence of the Master*
- *Isha Living*
- *Sexuality And Divine*
- *You*
- *SG Convex View book*
- *The sacred India Book*
- *Shiva Ultimate Outlaw*

7.2 Tamil

- *Sei... Seiyathe!* ISBN 978-81-8476-288-4
- *Athanaikum Asaipadu* ISBN 81-89780-05-0
- *Moondravathu Konam* ISBN 978-81-8476-155-9
- *Unakkagave Oru Ragasiyam* ISBN 978-81-89936-24-2
- *Konjam Amudham Konjam Visham* ISBN 978-81-8476-134-4
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- *Anandha Alai*
- *Ganathin Bramandam*
- *Guru Thantha Guru*
- *Moondravath Konam*

7.3 Hindi

- *Ek Aadhyatmik Guru Ka Alaukik Gyaan* ISBN 978-81-8495-142-4
- *Mrutyu Ek Kalpana Hai* ISBN 978-81-288-2969-7
- *Srushti se srushta tak* ISBN 978-81-288-2970-3
- *Aatm-Gyan : Aakhir Hai Kya* ISBN 978-81-288-3495-0, {First Edition in August-2011}

7.4 Kannada

- *Gnyanodaya* ISBN 978-81-7286-606-8
- *Karunege Bhedavilla* ISBN 81-7286-591-0

7.5 Telugu

- *Gnani Sannidhilo*
- *Sadhguru Subhaashitaalu* ISBN 978-93-80409-77-1
- *Maunamto Rahasyam* ISBN 978-93-80409-48-1

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9 Further reading

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10 External links

- Quotations related to Jaggi Vasudev at Wikiquote
- Sadhguru’s official website
- Isha Foundation – Home Page

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